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Filed : January 19, 2005

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 10 have been allowed. Claim 20 has been objected to. Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 13 and 15 have been amended. Claims 2, 3, 11, 12, 19 and 20 have been canceled. New claims 23-40 have been added. Thus, claims 1, 4-10, 13-18 and 21-40 are presented for examination. Support for the amendment to claim 15 may be found in original claim 20. New claim 23 corresponds to original claim 2. New claims 23-31 correspond to original claims 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, and 14, respectively. New claim 32 corresponds to original claim 3, with the addition of "wherein the content of an acid component in the photoresist composition is 10 ppm or less." Support for this phrase may be found in the specification at page 19, lines 7-12. New claims 33-40 correspond to original claims 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, and 14, respectively. Thus, no new matter has been added.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejections in view of the amendments and comments presented herein are respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claims 2, 4-9, 11, 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, based on recitation of "the content of an acid component is 10 ppm or less." The Examiner stated that it was unclear if the compound generating an acid is present in the amount of 10 ppm or less, or if the acid generated by the compound should be 10 ppm or less. Claim 2 has been canceled herein, and claims 4-9, 11, 13 and 14 no longer depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 2. Thus, the rejection is moot with regard to these claims.

New claims 23 and 32, and amended claim 1, recite that "the content of an acid component in the photoresist composition is 10 ppm or less." This "acid component" has no direct relation to "the compound generating an acid" (component B). This acid component includes the acid catalyst used in the reaction of the resin and a crosslinking agent, and the acid contained in impurities in the raw materials, including the reaction solvent, used for manufacturing the chemically amplified positive photoresist composition of the present invention. The specification at page 19, lines 7-12, states that:

"After the reaction, the operation of removing the acid component contained in the reaction product is preferably conducted, if necessary. The acid component can be removed by the same method as in the case of the novolak resin."

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As a result, the concentration of the acid in the styrenic resin after the reaction can be adjusted to preferably 10 ppm or less..."

Thus, the recitation that "the content of an acid component in the photoresist composition is 10 ppm or less" in claims 1, 23 and 32 conforms to the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

In view of the claim amendment, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 3, 4-6/3, 8/3, 9/3, 12, 15-19, 21 and 22 were rejected as being anticipated by Adams et al. (US 2002/0012869). Claims 3, 12 and 19 have been canceled herein, thus rendering the rejection moot as it applies to these claims. The rejection will be addressed as it applies to the remaining claims. Claims 4-6, 8 and 9 as amended depend on claim 1 which was indicated to be allowable. Accordingly, dependent claims 4-6, 8 and 9 should also be allowable. Claim 15 as amended recites that the component (B1) is a poly(bissulfonyl)diazomethane photo acid generator. Adams et al. neither discloses nor suggests this component. Thus, claim 15, and dependent claims 16-18, 21 and 22, are not anticipated by this reference. New claims 23 and 32 recite that "the content of an acid component in the photoresist composition is 10 ppm or less" which is not disclosed by this reference.

In view of the claim amendments, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b).

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 3 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Adams et al. (US 2002/0012869) in view of Takeda et al. (U.S. 6,593,056 B2). Claim 3 has been canceled, and claim 7 has been amended to depend on allowed Claim 1. Thus, the rejection no longer applies to these claims. New claims 23 and 32 recite that "the content of an acid component in the photoresist composition is 10 ppm or less" which is neither disclosed nor suggested by Adams et al.

In view of the claim amendments, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

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CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of all outstanding rejections are respectfully requested. Allowance of the claims at an early date is solicited. If any points remain that can be resolved by telephone, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-given telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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